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Let the Mission Lamps be burning
Through the wide world shining bright,
Leading sorrowing little children
Out of darkness into light.

METHODS OF WORK
FOR LEADERS OF
Children's Mission Circles

WOMAN'S BOARD OF MISSIONS,
Congregational House, Boston.

ISSUED BY COMMITTEE ON JUNIOR WORK.

1893.

Revised in 1897.

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I CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE,

BOSTON, February, 1897.

TO THE LEADERS OF MISSION CIRCLES.

The Committee on Junior Work sendeth greeting: Having known and appreciated your unwearied efforts to further the great cause of Foreign Missions by training and developing the children in this department of Christian work, and realizing the difficulties that beset your way, we desire to aid you if possible by placing before you, in convenient form for reference, helpful suggestions gathered from many sources. And to you personally we would breathe a loving word of advice. Do not underestimate the importance of the work you are doing. The children of today are they upon whom fifteen years hence must rest the responsibility of advancing and upholding every agency which prepares in all desert places the highway for our God. How shall they work except they be trained? Lose the present opportunity and you lose the child, upon whose active, growing brain impressions made now will prove lasting. Again, with the children rests a mighty power and influence:

“For the gifts and the prayers of the children,
Gathered in one strong band,
May conquer the world for Jesus
And make it a holy land.”

Listen to this record of some of the work which they have done in the past. They have built four *Morning Stars*; part of the Bowker Hall, India; the building for the girls' school at Kusaie, Micronesia; Inanda Seminary, Africa; the home at Pao-ting-fu, China; and the school at Van, Turkey; have given kindergarten buildings to Smyrna and to Cesarea; and are contributing generously to Capron Hall, the new quarters for the Girls' Normal School in Madura, India. These are

the larger interests which have enlisted their sympathy, but there is no department of the work which has not had their coöperation in greater or less degree. To aid in their efforts, mite boxes are constantly on hand to be sent out from the Rooms of the Woman's Board among our own constituency free of cost, except for charges of express or postage.

An important part of our work is that carried on through the Cradle Roll among the youngest children. A leaflet giving full particulars as to the formation and management of Cradle Rolls (price two cents) may be had at the Rooms, also enrollment cards, which are sent on the same terms as the mite boxes.

Attractive sets of programs for children's meetings have been published, price five cents for the complete series.

No leader should be without the *Mission Dayspring*, the children's paper, and it will be found an invaluable aid, if placed in the homes, by making each child a subscriber.

All the helps named, as well as a complete catalogue of leaflets, may be had by applying to Miss A. R. Hartshorn, 1 Congregational House, Boston.

In closing we beg you, dear leaders, to consider certain truths "lest ye be weary and faint in your minds."

Consider "that the Creator of the ends of the earth fainteth not, neither is weary," and that "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

Consider that "Your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Consider that "The Word of the Lord standeth sure."

PRELIMINARY WORK.

The success of any organization depends very largely upon the way it starts off. There is so much in beginning right that it is sometimes best to delay calling together for organization until a good deal of preliminary work has been done; until the subject has been thoroughly talked over and the interest of many persons, especially that of the mothers, has been enlisted in the undertaking.

Much of this can be done through the older societies, where there are such. In one church a society of young ladies took this work upon themselves, and made a thorough canvass of the children and young people of the church, inviting them — especially those who had recently united with the church — to assist in forming a missionary society, also asking the mothers and older sisters to use their influence in the home to have the children attend; so that many were really promised before the organization was attempted. But if there are no older societies, and only one person in the church interested to have a mission circle, if she be thoroughly in earnest about the matter, and will persistently talk it up at all proper times and on all suitable occasions, there will in time be a sentiment sufficient to sustain a mission band when started.

There have doubtless been many failures simply for lack of this preliminary work.

Little can be done until the mothers are interested enough *to send* the children to the meeting. It is not sufficient to depend entirely upon the drawing power of the leader, be she ever so attractive. One leader says it is impossible for the mission circle to prosper without the coöperation of parents at home.

When such preparation has been made by many acting in concert, it will not be so difficult **a matter** to find a leader to go on with the work.

If the responsibility seems to be too great for one alone it may be shared equally by two or three ladies, or the leader may select the others to be her assistants.

ORGANIZATION.

When a leader has been found and a sufficient number of children have been committed to the movement to insure its success, then are we ready for organization.

Great care should be exercised in the simple matter of calling the children together. Sometimes the invitation may be given publicly by the pastor in the church service or in the Sabbath school, or it may be given to the classes separately through the teachers.

In some places it might be more effective to send out neat little notes of invitation, such as are used for parties, and to have the meeting at a private house, perhaps giving some little entertainment and serving light refreshments to emphasize the importance of the occasion.

Much should be made of this event, and it should be as pleasant as possible. Pictures and curiosities from mission fields are a great help in arousing interest at this first meeting.

At this meeting the names of those who wish to become members should be taken, the constitution adopted and officers elected. We give as a help the following constitution, which is simply suggestive, and can be changed to suit conditions.

CONSTITUTION FOR CHILDREN'S MISSION CIRCLES.

ARTICLE I. This Society shall be called the ——— Mission Circle, and by the payment of not less than \$5.00 annually shall be a Mission Circle of the Woman's Board of Missions.

ART. II. Its object shall be to help the cause of Foreign Missions by prayer, work, and gifts.

ART. III. Its officers shall be a President, Vice-President (one or more), Secretary (or Secretaries), and Treasurer.

The duty of the President shall be to preside at the meetings of the Society.

The Vice-President shall preside in case of the absence of the President.

The Secretary shall keep a record of all meetings, and read the same, and attend to the correspondence of the Society.

The Treasurer shall have charge of the funds, and shall make a report at each meeting.

ART. IV. Regular meetings shall be held, at which information in regard to Foreign Missions shall be given.

ART. V. Any child may become a member of this Society by attending the meetings and by the payment of —— annually.

ART. VI. The funds of this Society shall be forwarded to the Treasurer of the —— Branch of the Woman's Board of Missions.

OFFICERS.

It is thought best by those who have had large experience in such matters that, aside from the leader, the offices should all be filled by the children themselves, all, of course, acting under direction of the leader.

There should be many committees appointed — taking in if possible all of the members — such as :

News Gatherers or Heralds. — To bring in the latest news from missionary fields, arrivals and departures of missionaries, etc.

Map Drawers. — To draw maps of the countries studied, marking on them the mission stations, also pictures of mission ships, or any other pictures illustrating the work. These can be drawn on a blackboard, if there is one in the room where the meetings are held, or on paper at home and brought to the meeting. In a company of children there are always to be found a few who are very fond of drawing maps and pictures, and these can be interested by giving them this congenial employment.

Program Committee. — Whose business it will be to assist the leader in carrying out her program by seeing the ones to whom any part has been assigned, by doing errands, etc.

Business Committee. — To see that the room where meetings are held is in order, chairs arranged, Bibles and hymn books in their places, to see to getting and returning anything that may be borrowed for the meeting, etc.

Outlook Committee. — To look after the absentees and invite persons to become members; to meet strangers at the door and see that all are comfortably seated.

Floral Committee. — To attend to the floral decorations for public meetings, and, if it seems best, to provide flowers for every meeting.

Music Committee. — To provide music for special occasions, and occasionally extra music for regular meeting.

Entertainment Committee. — To assist the leader in preparing for social and public meetings in ways not provided for by the other committees.

In one very successful circle, which has been in existence several years, the election of officers is followed by their installation. They

come forward in turn while the leader reads to each one, very distinctly and slowly, the duties of his or her office as given in the constitution, and gives to each an appropriate passage of Scripture and a badge of office.

NAME.

With most children a great deal depends upon the name, and it is more or less important with all; but on this point the tastes of boys and girls differ widely. Boys will rally to the name of Club, Band, or Brigade, while girls prefer Busy Bees, Earnest Workers, Daisy Chain, or some such name; and it is sometimes difficult in a circle composed of both to select a name that will suit all. In such cases, since it is the fashion to have floral emblems for societies and classes, it may be pleasant to adopt a flower in addition to the name, so that the band or club may also be known as the Daisies or Pansies.

TIME AND PLACE.

The time and place of holding meetings will be determined somewhat by their character. If the meetings are for work they must necessarily be held on a week day. Meetings for prayer and missionary intelligence have in some places been held on Sabbath afternoon with good success, some having an additional meeting during the week for work.

The hour immediately after the close of school on Friday has proved to be a very good time. The schools are in most places dismissed a little earlier on that day, and the children have a feeling of freedom on account of lessons done, and are not yet occupied with the various duties and pleasures that are generally reserved for Saturday.

All leaders are agreed that the more frequently meetings are held the greater will be the interest; but in some places, in scattered communities, it is impossible to gather frequently, and the interest has been kept up by correspondence and by planning work to be done at home, with only one or two meetings during the year. The names of members are recorded in the society's book with the amounts pledged by each for the year, and each one has a mite box. With the *Dayspring* and an occasional letter and leaflet from the leader the interest need not greatly lag.

METHODS OF CONDUCTING MEETINGS.

A meeting for children must never lag, but be kept moving, and that quite rapidly. This can only be done by having every item of the

program prepared beforehand. It must also stop promptly on time, for if the children are wearied once they will be very apt to remain away the next time.

Appropriate music is an important item for the program, and adds greatly to the interest. It is a good plan to adopt some good missionary hymn to sing at every meeting, either to open or close the meeting with, and have the children learn the words.

In opening, a few well-selected verses of Scripture should be read, and explanations given to make it more effective; or it may be well to have them repeat some particular Psalm each time, after which a short prayer service in which the children take part. If this is impossible at first, let the leader begin to train them for it by having them repeat after her a prayer, sentence by sentence, or encourage some of the more timid ones to write a little prayer at home and learn it or read it at the meeting. In these efforts if one seems to falter, supply very softly a sentence for it to repeat — just as mothers so often do with their little ones — making it as homelike and easy as possible.

Throughout the meeting there should be a careful observance of parliamentary rules and the proper form of procedure. Let everything be done with dignity. Much more depends upon this than we are apt to suppose. A society of boys were kept in regular attendance upon their meetings, which were devoted entirely to readings from the *Missionary Herald*; and their leader says their strict adherence to parliamentary rules had much to do with keeping up their interest. Everything was brought up and voted upon in a businesslike way.

Afternoon meetings may be held for sewing and other work — one hour being given to missionary intelligence. This hour should be the main feature of the meeting, for in it must be compressed the work that is to tell on their future lives.

One leader says: "Our band of boys was held together for years by letting them play ball, snowball, and any game that boys like, for a time; then one precious hour was given to work and missionary intelligence, when we put our best wits to work to interest and impress them."

Another says: "Let the devotional and missionary hour come first, the sewing hour follow, and the play hour come last;" adding that nothing but actual observation can make one realize the difference in the whole tone of the circle between the days when this order was followed and the times when for any reason the prayer meeting was held at the close.

The topics with the accompanying helps given monthly in *Life and Light* will greatly aid leaders in carrying on mission studies.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

The following detailed reports of societies in successful operation, which have been gathered from different leaders, may be helpful:

"The girls come at two; at four all work is laid aside. The Scripture is read, often each one reading aloud or reciting a verse. Then the leader tries to have many short petitions, urging the girls to have one honest request to make, all being on their knees. Then the leader gathers up as well as she can the timid prayers with her own, ending with the Lord's Prayer."

Another: "The children come early and play as they wish until the time for the meeting, when we gather around the table and recite Psalm lxvii in concert. One gives the motto 'Freely ye have received, freely give;' another, the command, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;' another, their promise 'to give one cent a week;' and one gives the whisper motto of the Pansy Society, 'For Jesus' sake.' Then the leader offers prayer, the children repeating. Then stories from missionary papers and books are read, and the meeting closes by singing. The children belonging to this society are all under nine years of age."

"One circle of boys and girls is divided into classes after the opening exercises, each class doing, under the supervision of a teacher, some kind of work — the girls sewing and the boys making scrapbooks — and while working each teacher reads or talks to her class on a given missionary subject."

Says the leader: "After three quarters of an hour spent in this way we lay aside our work and have a map exercise under the care of the leader. Sometimes we have questions and answers or recitations in which all take part, or a review of what was told at the previous meeting, generally spending three or four meetings on the study of a country, learning the stations and missionaries by name. Often after listening to some story of missionary work our hearts are stirred, and we kneel and quite a number offer prayer. Sometimes slips are distributed beforehand, with written subjects for prayer on them."

Another circle, composed of boys and girls, "meets in church parlors at three P.M. First hour spent in playing games. Meeting called to order at four, business committee having previously arranged the seats.

Then the following program is carried out: (1) singing; (2) Scripture; (3) prayer; (4) singing; (5) minutes of last meeting; (6) treasurer's report; (7) singing; (8) items about the country studied, by all the members; (9) singing; (10) reading of selections on country studied; (11) singing. At the close of the exercises, five o'clock, simple refreshments are served by a committee appointed for the purpose—all the food being brought by the children. Printed cards are given out on the previous Sunday, giving time of meeting and name of country about which items are to be brought."

In some places the King's Daughters' and King's Sons' circles have been combined into one missionary society, the circles being the divisions or classes of the missionary society.

One plan that has worked well in the large societies is to give each division some country for special study, and let them be known by the name of that country, such as Chinese or African Band.

One society, composed of boys and girls, organized on this plan began with seventeen members and increased to one hundred and nine—eighty-four working members and twenty-five honorary. Out of each band two were chosen as leaders. Each member was instructed to learn all he could about his country, by reading, by asking questions, and in any way he could, so that he might be able to tell the rest something interesting about his new home. The leaders were to see their countrymen before any meeting and provide items for them when necessary; also each band in turn was to have its special day to provide and serve the supper and the principal literary exercises, the leader giving an original paper, and all who were old enough to read were to have short stories. Each band has its badge to distinguish it from the others. Any one wishing to adopt this plan may find a more extended account of its workings in the July number of *Life and Light* for 1888.

An interesting feature in a circle where there are boys is an orchestra which will furnish music for their public and social meetings. This has worked well in one place in a circle composed partly of boys, holding the older boys when they were beginning to feel that they had outgrown the society.

SUGGESTIONS FROM LEADERS.

"A meeting may be made interesting by holding an imaginary telephone communication with some mission station in Mexico. Arrange a dialogue bringing out the story of the mission work in that country.

A boy speaking for the circle must stand in sight, and the boy supposed to speak for the station out of sight, but within hearing. A toy telephone, a small bell and the 'hello' will add fun and reality to the exercise."

"Children may personate our missionaries. It might be dry to look up facts as facts. It is great fun to ask, 'How is your hospital getting on, Dr. Parker?' or 'How do you like the *Morning Star*, Mrs. Pease?' Let them retain the personages for some time, bringing in fresh facts."

For a circle of little ones. "Let them bring tiny packages of the products of some country; for example, Ceylon, such as tea, coffee, cinnamon, pepper, etc. Let the little ones lay a small table with toy dishes, and one by one the packages may be taken to the table and their contents placed in the dishes on the table. The little girls who lay the table may personate the missionaries, and a short dialogue between them may bring out the table manners."

Another interesting exercise. "Follow in imagination some missionary to her field of labor, having the following topics: (1) Preparations, outfit, etc. (2) Describe ship on which she sails, the port from which it starts, so as to compare it with the port at the end of her journey. (3) Journey across the Atlantic or Pacific as the case may be. As the custom is, have letters to read on your way which have been prepared by friends. One of these may be from the pastor and one from some other circle. Pursuing a like course, describe as minutely as possible the entire journey, all places passed, their peculiarities, etc.—much of this can be learned from geographies. (4) Then the arrival at her station, her reception, description of country, etc."

Another method as given in the *Sunday School Times*. Begin one hundred years ago, and come down to our time step by step with the name of some noted missionary for each period of ten years. Have a map of the world, taking the name of Mr. Carey for the first. Give his history, then write the date of his birth and death on a little paper attached to a long pin and stick it into the map at the place marked Serampore—and so on with others down to the present. Children may bring other names which they can stick on the map, giving, of course, the history of each.

The missions of different denominations may be indicated by different colored strips added to the pin. This gives a broad view of the work done by all the churches. To follow the history of missionaries gives a better view of the missionary work in general than to study it in any other way.

METHODS OF RAISING MONEY.

While the aim should always be to have the contributions of money come as a result of interest aroused, yet we all know that unless some plan is adopted to secure systematic giving very little will be accomplished. Each member should pay a small annual fee, as stated in the constitution, and in addition pledge a definite sum, even though it should be very small.

It is also a good plan to have the children get their older friends to become honorary members by the payment of a small sum. This gives them encouragement, beside adding to the funds. Children should always be encouraged to make their own money, or save it from the allowance which many have.

REPORTS.

The following reports will furnish suggestions on this point. "In a certain farming town the members of the mission circle have small missionary gardens, and sell potatoes, corn, flowers, anything they can raise. They choose an autumn afternoon for a grand outdoor gathering, to which parents and friends are invited, and have a sort of jubilee when the results of the year's work are made known and rejoiced over."

"Another society has a 'harvest festival,' and combines a sale of fruits and flowers with exercises by the children."

"In one town the society has given an entertainment, consisting of tableaux of scenes on mission fields, with great success, charging an admission fee."

"A band of girls made perfumed handkerchief boxes to sell."

"In one society the boys conducted an ice-cream sale."

"A floral cantata was given by twenty-eight little girls."

"In one society the children were given five cents apiece to use in making more. They bought and sold clothespins, paper, pencils, berries; made and sold toothpicks, paper flowers, sweeping caps, knit edging, and one hired a hen. The smallest gain was twenty-five cents; the largest, two dollars and ten cents."

"One society sold cake and ice cream at a 'missionary evening,' where many were dressed in foreign costumes."

"One circle held a farewell reception for some dolls which were soon to be sent to a missionary, and increased their funds by selling refreshments."

MITE BOX.

For any sort of society the mite box is always in order, and is certain to bring a blessing to any one who takes it. If put in a conspicuous place in the room it is a constant reminder to the owner, and it may be suggestive to others.

Children's societies to be successful must be made as attractive and popular as possible, and it is therefore necessary in our planning to take into consideration the social element. A picnic in summer and an entertainment in winter can be made to contribute much to the interest in missions if rightly managed, but do not forget that they *must be managed*.

All the methods here given may be used to advantage if the ultimate object — that of helping to carry the gospel to those who have it not — is faithfully kept before the minds of the children. It would be well to have before every such gathering a special meeting of a few moments for prayer and counsel, to establish in their minds this connection.

This suggestion comes from one who still feels the effect of impressions made upon her when a child by her mission circle leader, as in those little preparatory meetings she talked to them, and prayed that they might have their hearts filled with love, and that in spite of weariness and excitement they might, under all circumstances, by their words and actions, show the true missionary spirit, which is the spirit of Christ.

CRADLE ROLL.

There should be in every church, either in connection with the mission band or the senior auxiliary, a "cradle roll." Record in a book for this purpose the names of little ones too young to belong to the mission circle, whose mothers or friends will contribute a small sum, giving to each, one of the cards before mentioned. A badge may also be given, — a bright ribbon with C. R. painted on it. Have them all come once a year to a meeting prepared especially for them. The one having charge of this roll may occasionally through the year send to each one a letter, picture, or leaflet, which the mother will, of course, read or explain to the child.

HINTS GATHERED.

"To increase membership give personal invitations, call and ask other children to call for children on the way to the meeting."

"It is better to tell interesting things in an interesting way, and to look into the bright young faces of the children, and have them look into yours while talking."

"In teaching missionary facts build on knowledge which the children already possess. Take, for instance, countries that are being studied at school, to begin with."

"Teach as much as possible by pictures."

"Do not read a long missionary letter, however interesting. Give it to them in parts."

"Do not be afraid to use and teach parliamentary rules. It pays!"

"Have a scrapbook in your circle for which the young people may collect pictures and items. The scrapbook of colored cambric can be made by some of the girls."

"Fees from honorary members may purchase the *Mission Day-spring*."

LIST OF LEAFLETS FOR MISSION CIRCLES.

Bringing Up the Ranks to the Standard	\$.02
Boys' Side of the Question, The	.02
Beginning of It, The	.03
Boys' Mission Bands	.03
Call to the King's Young Daughters	.02
Chih, the Little Chinese Girl	.03
Children and Missions	.02
Children in Papal Lands	.04
Children in Turkey	.01
Constitution for Mission Circles	Free.
Cradle Roll, and How to Form One	.02
Cradle Roll (A Story)	.03
Cradle Roll Enrollment Cards. Free to the constituency of the W. B. M. on payment of postage.	
Day in Kusaie, A	.02
Dispensary at Tung-cho, China	.03
Dawn of the Little Light Bearers	.05
Gods of Hindu Children, The	.03
How the Golden Rule Band Grew	.02
Helps for Leaders of Juvenile Mission Bands	.05
If They Only Knew	.02
Kindergarten in Cesarea	.03

(List of Leaflets continued.)

Laying Foundations	\$.03
Little Light Bearers in Turkey	.03
Margaret's "Might Box"	.03
Methods of Work for Leaders of Children's Mission Circles	.05
Missionary Concert Exercise, A	.02
Mission Bands in Many Lands	.04
Mother's Morning Prayer, A	.01
Questions and Answers on China, Japan, India, and Africa. Each	.05
Set of Programs for Children's Meetings	.05
Story of a Mission Circle	.03
Smyrna Kindergarten, The	.03
Unfinished Ladder, The	.01
Work Among Children	.03
Zulu Blind Boy's Story	.01
Book of Dialogues and Recitations	.40
Another Missionary Meeting	.02
Chinese Caller, A	.04
Children's Light-house	.03
Foreign Missionary Steamship	.05
Light and Darkness	.05
Offerings to the Genius of Christianity	.02
Past, Present, and Future	.05
Proposition, The	.04
Reason Why, The	.04
Sowing Light	.02
What's the Use?	.02

These dialogues are all contained in the "Book of Dialogues and Recitations."

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MISS ADA R. HARTSHORN,

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